

THE BREWING STORM.

Reminiscences of the Days Before
Secession Took to Arms.

P. S. BLACKMON,
Co. B, 63d Ind., West Berkeley, Cal.

I was at work as a machinist in Pittsburg the last few weeks of 1860, and as the great part of the patronage of the shops came from the Southern States, the secession agitation interrupted business so completely between the North and the South, that the proprietors said there would be no more business for the shop until the trouble was settled. So of course the workmen were discharged.

The widow with whom I had been boarding had visiting her an old gentleman from Sabine Pass, Tex., who had been a ship-carpenter in Pittsburg. He had engaged passage home on a small steamboat built for a party at Sabine Pass. A daughter and her husband were going with him, and nearly persuaded me to go along with them, as the old gentleman said business was good there, and he did not think the disturbance would ever reach his part of the State.

Before the boat was ready to start, one night after all had retired and all was still, I heard the front door suddenly open and some one enter, who exclaimed in a tone of excitement:

Well, mother, I got home alive, anyway.

The next day I learned that he was the widow's older son, just arrived from Texas, and from what he told me of the excitement and behavior of the Texans toward people from the North, I concluded to go on the little boat to further than Cairo, Ill., on my way to Terre Haute, Ind., to join my wife.

As the boat was not on schedule time, she stopped at several towns along the river to kill time and gather the news. At Wheeling I created a mild sensation unintentionally. I wore a long blue cloak—it being cold weather—which covered me completely from neck to heels. I sauntered up one of the streets in the evening, and it being Sunday, I saw a church lighted up. I walked in to hear the sermon. Not having on my Sunday suit, I pulled the cloak close around me, and my rusty clothes. Observing an intense gaze directed toward me, I began to wonder if I were an object of suspicion. After the meeting broke up, and on my way to the boat, I followed me on my way to the boat. Then it dawned on my dull perception that I was suspected of being a Government spy, but as the preacher made no incendiary speeches their fears subsided.

I got off at Cairo, Ill., to go by railroad to Centra, 100 miles north, but had to stay over night at Cairo, and for lack of other amusement accepted an invitation by a casual acquaintance to listen to a secessionist speech by a young gentleman from South Carolina, named Ogilvie Byron Young. He was a very eloquent speaker, and made an impressive argument in favor of southern Illinois joining the South in the prospective Southern Confederacy, especially from a business and commercial point of view, as thus they would have free access by the Mississippi River to the seaboard, and their business transactions would naturally go South instead of North. It was an orderly meeting, except that three or four hissed at a certain point. The speaker quietly remarked that he knew of but two animals that hissed—the snake and the goose. The hissing soon got up and left the house.

At Centra, north of Cairo, I stayed at a hotel a few days. This little railroad town, where I stayed, the next morning, gave Lincoln a majority. Excitement was running high. Almost the entire conversation was about the disturbance South. Men were stopping there who wanted to go South, but dared not all the excitement subsided. Men were arriving from the South, fugitives from the suspicions and hatred of the "fire-eaters." A young machinist from Columbia, S. C., made his escape across the country to Cairo.

One absorbing topic of conversation was the Knights of the Golden Circle. Col. Bickley, the reputed head of the Order, had lately been in Centra, and it was said had organized a Circle, with some of the leading men as members.

A young blacksmith of the town came in often to hear the news and discuss secession. He was a zealous Union man, and on Sunday morning, Jan. 6, he was telling us of Col. Bickley's doings, and was telling us his hiding a certain lady, Umfrey, good-bye at the door of a house where a gathering had just closed a session, and of Umfrey saying to Bickley:

"Well, go on, Colonel, and carry on your good work, and we'll watch these Black Republicans, and hang them to the lamp-posts if they raise a disturbance."

"Young man, I would have you understand that you are a little too noisy. You think of intimidating people with your Knights of the Golden Circle, and perhaps you better not say too much about them, either."

That ended the conversation for a time, but I was too full to drop the subject entirely, so I sat down and scratched off the following lines and took them to the local printing office of the *Egyptian Herald*, in which paper they were printed:

ANTI-SECESSION.
Here's a hand to the laboring band
Of mudsills and mechanics
Who by their forte the State support
In thrift and even through panics.
Let traitors hold, who rant and scold
Because the mighty God of
Fails to enslave the honest brave,
Restrains unheeded choicer.
As well may raze the wind-tossed wave
Above the mighty deep.
While in their might beneath the fright
The waters tranquil keep;
For while the great may agitate
And toss about the ship of State,
Beneath the storm the stalwart form
Of Labor truly great
Will bear along with purpose strong
The good old Constitution.
And never heed the husband breed
Who shout for revolution.
For soon we'll find the earnest mind
Half working, thinking millions
Stand boldly forth, both South and North,
To hurl from power the scoundrels
Who proudly ride upon the tide
Of bitter, scolding treason.
And renege as sure as fate,
The reign of Right and Reason.

BUSY DAYS AT SOLDIERING.
The Doings of the 117th Ill. as Told by One
of Its Members.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The 117th Ill. was organized at Cairo, Ill., in September, 1862, by Col. R. M. Moore, and was mustered into the United States service Sept. 19 by Capt. Washington. We moved from Cairo, Ill., and arrived at Memphis on the 17th; remained on duty there until July 5, when we were sent to Helena, Ark., to reinforce Prentiss. We returned to Memphis Dec. 25, were sent afterwards into Western Tennessee, losing three men killed in a skirmish at Lafayette, Tenn.

We moved to Vicksburg, and were assigned to the Third Brigade, Third Division, Sixteenth Corps. We were on the Meridian campaign. On Feb. 5 we were engaged in a skirmish, losing two killed and five wounded. We returned to Vicksburg March 4, and on the 10th embarked on transports for Red River to join Banks's expedition. We arrived in the capture of Fort De Russay March 14, 1864; were engaged at Pleasant Hill April 9, 1864, and several other places. We were at Yellow Bayou May 4, and arrived at the Mississippi River May 29, having been 66 days under fire out of the 76 days of the expedition. We boarded transports and went up the river, arriving at Memphis June 10, going to the relief of Sturgis in West Tennessee, and then commenced the Tupelo campaign. We went next on

the Oxford campaign, and returned to Memphis Aug. 30, and went up the river to Jefferson Barracks Sept. 19, and started to help drive Price out of Missouri. We were engaged at Franklin, Mo., Oct. 1. We returned to St. Louis Nov. 19. We went to Nashville to reinforce Thomas, and were engaged at Nashville Dec. 15 and 16. The regiment captured a rebel battery of three guns and turned them on the retreating rebels. We marched after the retreating army, reaching the Tennessee, Jan. 4, 1865. We embarked at Eastport for New Orleans, arriving there Feb. 17, and were in the battle and capture of Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely April 8 and 9. We started for Montgomery April 18, arriving there on the 25th, and leaving there for Camp Butler July 16, being mustered out by James A. A. Hall, U. S. A. We traveled by rail 778 miles, by water 6,191, and marched 2,300. We were engaged in six battles and 33 skirmishes.—A. F. WEAVER, Nokomis, Ill.

With Grant at Lookout Mountain.

"I was an Orderly on Gen. Grant's staff," writes Congressman Free of West Virginia, "in the April Success, and was sent one day with dispatches on his fine little black horse, loaned me for the occasion. As I returned with the replies, I rushed around a full brigade of the enemy. I wheeled and started to run for it, with it seemed to me, every 'reb' in the hot shooting at me. My horse was shot, and I went flying over his head. I landed on all fours, and continued on my way in this position, as I had neither time to get up nor desire to be a more conspicuous mark, until I got around that bend in the road. Then I made record-breaking time to our camp. I ran up, all covered with blood and dust, and handed my dispatches to a Lieutenant, who gave them to the General. After reading the dispatches, the great commander turned and looked me over in his quiet way, and said: 'Give this Orderly another horse.' I heard Gen. Grant say to Gen. Thomas, just before the famous charge up Lookout: 'If we don't win this fight, I know one General who will lose his shoes—straps.' He looked keenly at Thomas, as if he were in his quiet, earnest way, and turning on his heel, walked to his tent. There had been some friction between them, owing to Gen. Grant's superseding the other General in the full command."

A CONFEDERATE CONSCRIPT.

Deserted and Later Served Nearly Three Years in the Union Army.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: When the war commenced I lived in a Southern State. What little property I had was also there, and when the secession of that State was left to the vote of the people I voted for the Union. When the State seceded I still stood firm for the Union, and I avoided enlistment in the rebel service. The conscript law was enforced there was one of two things to do—go into the service or slip out of the country by night. I went into the service, and a favorable opportunity to escape to the Union army which I did just four months from the time I was forced into the rebel service. I went with a number of others. After lying out in the mountains during a cold winter, and being hunted like wild beasts, I and several others made our way to the nearest Federal post at Fayetteville, Ark., and joined the Union army. Co. E, 1st Art.

I served in that regiment two years, five months and 10 days. The regiment was mustered out of the service Aug. 10, 1865, at Fort Smith, Ark.

I voted for Lincoln in 1864; for Grant in 1868 and 1872; for Garfield in 1880; for Blaine in 1884; for Harrison in 1888 and 1892; and for McKinley in 1896. My loyalty has never been doubted.

Under Harrison's Administration I was granted a pension under the new law at \$12 per month; under Cleveland's Administration I was called to task; that is, they proposed to reduce my pension to \$8, for lack of disability; if sufficient cause was not shown, but after examination, then Commissioner of Pensions, restored me to the \$12; under Commissioner Evans I was dropped from the pension rolls entirely for the reason, as he says, of aiding the rebellion.

All the hardships that I went through, and dangers encountered, being in the rebel army, and all the long service I performed was not taken into account by Evans, because I was forced into the rebel service, though I never fired a gun while there.

I claim that few soldiers in the Union army from the Southern States proved their loyalty and devotion by the greatest sacrifices. Even at the mercy of a relentless enemy, asking loyalty to the Union more nobly displayed.—JOHN C. YADOW, Co. E, 1st Art., Fort Smith, Ark.

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